28 March 2018

Joan McAlpine MSP
Convener
Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener,

I am writing to you following your meeting on 8 March 2018 when the Culture Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee took evidence from the agencies responsible for the delivery of the new Screen Unit.

I am sorry that I was unable to give evidence in person on that day, however would like to report in more detail on our progress with setting up the new unit to deliver the recommendations in the Screen Sector Leadership Group’s report.

As Iain Munro stated, we are progressing with implementation and this will be rolled-out incrementally.

**Timeframe**

Roll-out of the expanded services to be delivered through the Screen Unit is underway.

The first step in achieving this was the setting up of a new Governance Structure within Creative Scotland, which has brought together the partnership agencies together with representatives from Creative Scotland’s Board, the Scottish Government and industry representation as part of a new Screen Committee

Following feedback and constructive guidance from the Screen Sector Leadership Group (SSLG) at our meeting with them on 27 March, we plan to go live with the new Content Fund in May, providing access for the sector to the additional investment provided by the Scottish Government, alongside our continuing funds, refreshed and expanded. These will be accessed from that date through our existing channels and supported with clear guidance and criteria developed in consultation with the sector over the coming weeks, to ensure these new funds meet needs and opportunities.
We also discussed the formal public launch of the new Screen Unit– including new identity, website and ‘single front door’ with the SSLG. The group was clear in their view that we should hold the full public facing launch until the new leadership posts are in place. We have agreed to this with a view to launching in the summer.

**Governance**

The Screen Committee has met twice; on 20 February and 12 March and will meet again in early April. Its membership is confirmed as follows:

- Barclay Price: Chair (Creative Scotland Board member)
- Creative Scotland Board members: Karthik Subramanya; David Brew
- Industry representatives: John McCormick (Chair SSLG) and David Strachan (NB appointed following the second meeting. We are also planning to appoint a committee member with film industry experience)
- Partners: Linda Hanna, Scottish Enterprise, Michael Cross, Scottish Funding Council, Charlotte Wright, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Gordon McGuinness, Skills Development Scotland, Janet Archer, Creative Scotland and Executive Director, Screen and Creative Enterprise (once appointed)
- Jonathan Pryce and Carolyn Rae: Scottish Government

We anticipate that at least two new Creative Scotland Board members will be appointed this year. Our aim is that through public appointments process conducted by Scottish Government, new members will have Screen expertise and that one will take on the role of Chair when Barclay Price steps down from the Board in June 2018.

The Committee exists to advise Creative Scotland’s Board through scrutinising the implementation and delivery of the Screen Unit, consider, interrogate and advise on its development, and consider and frame effective partnership delivery to ensure the outcomes outlined in the Collaborative Proposal are achieved.

It does not deal with management or operational matters which sit within Creative Scotland’s Screen Directorate, reporting to Creative Scotland’s Leadership Team. This enables us to make swift, responsive decisions to funding and investment opportunities as they arise. We are currently providing support to 40 screen productions, 24 of which are films and 16, TV. We also continue to host recce visits and familiarisation trips in partnership with other UK agencies such as the British Film Commission. It is this type of activity which has attracted productions such as Outlander, T2 and Avengers: Infinity War to Scotland. Now that there is industry awareness of our new budgets through the publication of the Screen Unit Proposal in December 2017, we have seen an increase in interest from international production companies wanting to visit Scotland to understand how Scottish industry incentives compare with other nations.
**Staffing**

We are recruiting our first cohort of new staff to build capacity alongside the 10 dedicated and experienced Screen staff we currently employ, supported by other staff whose jobs include supporting our screen function (alongside our broader work in the arts and creative industries) in the areas of finance, business services, knowledge and research, communications, and strategy. Together these staff contribute to the delivery of the Screen Unit and they work under my direction as Chief Executive and SRO.

As you are aware, Natalie Usher, our former Director of Screen left the organisation on 9 March. We have appointed an Acting Director of Screen, Scott Donaldson to provide leadership and management continuity while we recruit to this role. Scott’s substantive role is Head of Film Education. He gave evidence in this capacity to the CTEER committee alongside myself and Brodie Pringle, our Head of Screen Commission, at the private session on 1 February, 2018.

The process of recruiting a new Executive Director of Screen and Creative Enterprise who will be responsible for leading the Screen Unit is underway. We are looking for someone with the ability to identify and pursue strategic opportunities and secure positive outcomes; the tactical and strategic ability to develop, translate and apply strategy internally and externally; the ability to manage complex and sensitive partnerships and command high level respect across public and private sectors.

**Brand identity and Website**

We have agreed a name for the Screen Unit which will be announced very soon. We are currently in final stages of designing a ‘single front door’ website for the Screen Unit which, for the first time, will bring access to the services provided by all of the partner agencies together in one place.

We presented this to the Screen Sector Leadership Group on 27 March and received very useful and constructive feedback.

The new identity and website will form part of the full launch of the Screen Unit in the coming months.

**Screen Unit Implementation Project Manager**

We have appointed a Project Manager, Mhora Samuel, who has a longstanding track record of working in the creative industries in a public-sector context, whose first task when she takes up post on April 3 will be to complete the Memorandum of Understanding (or service level agreement) underpinning the governance arrangements between the lead and partner agencies. This will be founded in the Terms of Reference for the Screen Committee which is due to be signed off by Creative Scotland’s Board on 29 March.

Another key task will be to translate the Screen Unit Proposal document into an industry facing business plan.
The key deliverables for the **first stage of the implementation period** (May 2018) are as follows:

- All new funds in place including the enhanced Production Growth Fund (£2m) and Content Development and Production Fund (£3m)
- £475,000 Scottish Government investment in place to support the National Film and Television School’s (NFTS) plans to set up a base in Scotland and support new bursaries, in partnership with the BBC
- Skills survey completed by EKOS and work begun to develop skills plan
- Research and statistics on the value of the sector carried out (Olsberg SPI economic baseline report)
- First phase of new staff recruitment underway (Executive Director, Director, 3 Screen Officers, Screen Commission officer, Admin and Comms staff).
- Plan for strategic commissioning partnerships, and first MoU in place
- Screen Committee in place and approach to wider industry engagement agreed

**The second phase of the Screen Unit Implementation** will include the following:

- Executive Director appointed
- Full public launch of the Screen Unit (identity, website, associated PR)
- Delivery of the new TV Content Development and Production fund
- Delivery of the enhanced Production Growth Fund
- Roll out of strategic partnerships
- Research and scoping carried out for new data hub
- Research and scoping carried out for enhanced business services for Scottish producers
- International activity to boost international business

**Current Screen Activity**

Alongside establishing strong foundations for the new Screen Unit, we are also engaged in a high volume of current activity on behalf of the screen sector in Scotland. This includes:

- Screen Commission (includes development of business cases for studio provision)
- Screen Executive Film and TV (tax credit loans, equity investment, production growth fund, distribution support)
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion working group
- Supporting key film exhibitors and festivals large & small (from SD)
- Scottish Film Talent Network
- Focus: business support for the screen sector
- Film Education
- Industry Skills Review
- Creative Europe Media Desk
Wider engagement with industry

We listened with interest to Iain Smith, Chair of the British Film Commission’s recent evidence to the CTEER Committee, which emphasised the need for national screen agencies to be agile and responsive to opportunities in a highly competitive marketplace. At our meeting with the SSLG yesterday we discussed options for how we might achieve this which included extending industry representation within our Screen Committee, as well as exploring the establishment of a separate Industry Advisory Group, building on the work that has been carried out through the Screen Sector Leadership Group to establish the case for the Screen Unit.

We will establish this once the Screen Unit is fully formed, and its leadership is in place. The Screen Sector Leadership Group will continue to meet over the next six months and work with us to explore the best way to achieve this.

I hope this gives you assurance on our work to deliver against the Screen Sector Leadership Group’s priorities which are:

- Increased funding for film and television production.
- Increased studio facilities and infrastructure for Scotland
- Increased investment in talent development, skills and training.
- Increased and appropriate business development support for screen businesses.
- Robust research and statistics on the value of the sector and the impact of funding and support mechanisms.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect of this work further.

Best wishes,

Janet Archer
CEO Creative Scotland